



King County

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2007

COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner	Christine Landon	District 1
Commissioner	Rob Collins, Vice Chair	District 2
Commissioner	Kris Meilahn	District 3
Commissioner	Heather M. Villanueva	District 4
Commissioner	Melissa Ponder, Chair	District 5
Commissioner	Vacant	District 6
Commissioner	Vacant	District 7
Commissioner	Vacant	District 8
Commissioner	Vacant	District 9
Commissioner	Kelly Guy	At-Large
Commissioner	Michael Brown	At-Large
Commissioner	Robert Blumenfeld	At-Large

The King County Civil Rights Commission was established in December, 1995 to take a strong leadership role in raising community awareness and involvement on civil rights issues and to advise the King County Executive and County Council on matters related to the County's civil rights programs. Its primary goal is to ensure equal opportunity for all through the effective enforcement of anti-discrimination ordinances and implementation of the County's civil rights programs. The Commission works in collaboration with a variety of interest groups including community, business, civic, and religious organizations.

On July 17, 2006, the size of the Commission was reduced from sixteen to twelve members by Ordinance 15548, to reflect the new size of the County Council. The Commission now has twelve members each serving three-year terms. County Council members representing each of the King County Council districts nominate nine members, while the remaining three serve as at-large members, selected by the County Executive. All Commission members are confirmed by the County Council and serve without pay. It is the goal of the County to recruit people from diverse ethnic and protected group backgrounds. The Commission seeks representation from the African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Caucasian, GLBT, and Disability communities. Commissioners reside within King County.

As the County's citizen advisory commission on civil rights, the Commission is responsible for reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness and progress of the County's affirmative action, non-discrimination enforcement, and minority/women business utilization programs. It is also responsible for educating the public and concerned groups on methods to prevent and eliminate discrimination and advising King County government on human and civil rights issues. The Commission periodically issues reports on its findings and makes formal presentations before the King County Council. The ordinance creating the Commission also established four standing committees through which the work of the Commission is accomplished. They are the Executive, Public Policy, Economic Development, and Community Relations Committees.

The Executive Committee "performs administrative oversight activities of the commission, including representing the commission, conducting business outside of regular commission meetings, and performing other relating and necessary activities in the interest of ensuring an effective County human and civil rights commission." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (A).

The Public Policy Committee "shall review and make recommendations on legislation, public rules and/or policies related to any of the County's equal opportunity, affirmative action, disability access and minority and women's business utilization programs." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (B).

The Economic Development Committee "reviews and makes recommendations for enhancing opportunities for utilization and participation of minority and women

businesses on County contracts and other related business development activities.” K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (C).

The Community Relations Committee “recommend[s] methods for educating concerned communities and the public at large on the work of the Commission and King County in advancing human and civil rights for all in the region and shall establish liaison with other regional and civil rights commissioners.” K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (D).

During 2007, it was decided to suspend the activities of the Public Policy, Economic Development and the Community Relations Committees, due to the number of vacancies on the Commission. It was agreed that the work of these committees would be performed by the full Commission.

In January 2007, Melissa Ponder was elected Chair, Mark Adreon was elected Vice-chair and Kris Meilahn was elected Secretary, to take effect on January 17, 2007. In April 2007, Mark Adreon resigned as Vice-chair, when his term on the Commission came to an end. Rob Collins was elected as the new Vice-chair on April 18, 2007. During this year, the Commission, under Melissa Ponder’s leadership, accomplished a significant number of achievements. They include:

Perform Other Related and Necessary Activities In The Interest Of Ensuring an Effective County Human and Civil Rights Commission:

- Office of Emergency Management Presentation: The Commission received a follow-up presentation from Timothy E. Doyle, Program Manager of the Public Education and Citizen Corps Councils, King County Office of Emergency Management on November 17, 2007. The purpose of the presentation was to be updated on the County’s plans for emergency and disaster response, particularly for the more vulnerable protected class populations. These communities included those with high numbers of residents with disabilities, with English as the secondary language, and with low income and historically disadvantaged residents. Mr. Doyle was joined by Carina Elsenboss, the Advanced Practice Center Program Manager in the Preparedness Section of the Department of Public Health. Ms. Elsenboss spoke about the Vulnerable Populations Network and Community Development work being done by Public Health.

Review And Make Recommendations On Legislation, Public Rules And/Or Policies Related To Any Of The County’s Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Disability Access And Minority And Women’s Business Utilization Programs:

- Review of Proposed 2008-2012 EEO/Affirmative Action Plan: In June 2007, the Commission invited Keven Franklin, the manager of Diversity Services Management, to give a presentation on the changes on the draft 2008-12 EEO/AA Plan. Mr. Franklin gave his presentation on June 20, 2007 and engaged in a dialogue with the Commission about the new five-year Plan. The

Commission reviewed and prepared comments to the Human Relations Division on the Proposed Plan. Those comments were submitted to Executive Sims and Council Chair Larry Gossett on July 10, 2007.

Review and Make Recommendations for Enhancing Opportunities for Utilization and Participation of Minority and Women Businesses on County Contracts and Other Related Business Development Activities:

- Contracting Opportunities Program: In May 2007, the Commission invited Sandy Hanks, Manager of the Office of Business Development and Contract Compliance to update the Commission on the County's new contracting program, Contracting Opportunities Program (COP).
- Minority Business Comments on County Contracting Programs: The Commission invited Charles Rolland and Harold Wright to speak about how the County's new contracting program, Contracting Opportunities Program (COP) impacted minority owned businesses on October 17, 2007.

Educate Concerned Communities and the Public at Large on the Work of the Commission and King County:

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration & Essay Contest: The Commission sponsored an Essay Contest on the theme of "It Started with a Dream.... Many Views, One Vision" to encourage 8th grade students to think critically about Dr. King's legacy of peace and justice. They gave awards to three student winners at the King County Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest. The students selected were: Caroline Sargent of Seattle, from the Bush School, first prize winner of \$100; Karen Hendrickson of Seattle, from Sylvester Middle School, second prize winner of \$75; and Olivia Pham of Seattle, from Sylvester Middle School, the third prize winner of \$50. The contest was open to all 8th graders in public and private schools in King County. All essays were judged on the author's knowledge of Dr. King and his work in the Civil Rights Movement, originality of ideas, development of point of view, insight, and clarity of expression, organization, and grammar.
- The First Annual African Heritage Unity Celebration: Commissioner Kelly Guy attended this event on February 25, 2007. She maintained an information table and shared information about the work of the Commission with the attendees.
- Community Celebration for the Unveiling of the New Logo for King County: Commissioners attended this event on March 11, 2007 after having supported the change in the County logo for several years.

- The 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre Commemoration at Hing-Hay Park: Commissioner Rob Collins represented the Commission at this event as a speaker in favor of Human Rights for all, on June 3, 2007.
- Sent a letter in Support of the Observance of the Integration of Little Rock High School in Little Rock, AR: Commissioner Rob Collins hand delivered a letter of congratulations on the observance of the 50th Anniversary of the integration of Little Rock High School by the Little Rock Nine.
- Black on Black Crime Coalition: Commissioner Rob Collins has been participating in the Coalition since its inception in June 2007.
- Co-sponsored the Fifth Seattle Race Conference: The Commission continued to cosponsor this event, designed to create a shared understanding and language about the nature of racism, its modern day forms and the tools that can be used to end it, and to activate a “movement” for racial justice in Seattle that includes sustainable action components. Commissioner Heather Villanueva served on the Planning Committee and the actual conference took place in November 3, 2007 at Seattle Center. This year’s theme was “*Legacies of Racism: Healing in our Communities.*” Commissioners Collins, Ponder and Villanueva were in attendance, as was Commission Administrator Harris-White.
- Relationship with King County Sheriff’s Office (KCSO): In 2007, the Commission continued to have a positive working relationship with the King County Sheriff’s Office, due to the collaborative efforts of Captain Mitzi Johanknecht and Commissioners.
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Work Group on Gangs Community Meeting: Commissioner Melissa Ponder attended the Community meeting in SeaTac in December 11, 2007.

Commissioners and the Commission Administrator met and/or networked with the following community organizations during 2007:

1. The American Civil Liberties Union
2. Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle
3. Asian Resource Center (ARC)
4. Seattle Race Conference Planning & Steering Committee
5. Asian Counseling & Referral Service
6. Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC)
7. Seattle Human Rights Commission
8. Nonprofit Assistance Center
9. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Rally and March Planning Committee
10. Human Rights Committee
11. American Federation of Teachers of Washington

Establish Relationships with Other Regional Civil Rights Commissions:

- Co-sponsored the Annual City of Seattle Human Rights Day: Commissioners Kris Meilahn and Heather Villanueva represented the Commission on the Planning Committee. The City of Seattle 2007 Distinguished Citizen Award for Human Rights winners were Casa Latino and Paulina Lopez. The awards were presented on December 6, 2007 and Commissioner Villanueva attended the event on behalf of the Commission.

Administrative:

In 2007 Michael Brown was appointed to replace Mario Morales in the at-large position. Rob Collins in District 2 was reappointed. Kelly Guy (at-large) resigned before the end of her term due to personal reasons. There continued to be vacancies in Districts 6, 7, 8, and 9, as well as a single at-large position at the close of the year.